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IDYLLS AND LYRICS

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IDYLLS AND LYRICS

BY

SIR LEWIS MORRIS, KNT.

M.A., HON. FELLOW JES. COLL., OXFORD, AND TRIN. COLL., LONDON
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IDYLLS AND LYRICS.



MORNING SONG.

AWAKE, arise !

Day's shining eyes

Open unclouded to the waking skies ;

Night and the hosts of Sleep,

Dispersed, defeated, creep

To their Lethæan dens and sunless caverns deep.

Hark ! with the day

His roundelay

Each brave bird sings, and speeds away ;

Aloft, on circling wings,
The mounting skylark sings,
A denizen of air, scorning terrestrial things.


Arise, awake !
And, singing, make
Thy morning orisons for Love's sweet sake.
Awake, awake, arise !
Keep the cerulean skies
Reflected in the faithful azure of thine eyes.

IN THE BAPTISTERY.

IN Pisa once, within the Baptistery
I well remember, the astonished ear
Took sounds too sweet for earth. For as we stood
Beneath the fretted ambit of the dome
The poor guide lifted a worn voice, not sweet,
But skilled to evoke the subtle harmonies
Which lurked in those dim heights ; a common voice
And earthy as the accents, coarse and dull,
Of some street singer at a tavern door,
Frighting the midnight street ; some hackneyed phrase
Stolen from the Missal-book, so poor and flat
We fain had silenced it.

But hark ! but hark !

Ere it is done what heavenly harmonies
Flout those poor tones of earth. The ambient air
Seems filled with voices, voices everywhere,
Of some angelic choir, which swell, which beat,
Reverberating ; circling waves of sound,
Now single, doubled now, and resonant
And grown together, and interlaced and lost
In some unearthly sweetness mystical,
Till all the enchanted vault is charged with joy,
As when of old, by some sea isle remote,
The lurking Sirens drew the listening crews ;
Or as the chanting quires which soar and fall
In hoary fanes ; or the aërial flights
Of the angelic host whose heavenly tones
The rapt Cecilia heard ; or those white ranks
Of gold-haired Seraphs, chanting row on row,
With viol and voice and trump, the painter saw
And filled with high-pitched music for all time



Though no sound come. Anon the circling waves,
Ebbing and flowing through the stately round
Of that great dome, are driven back, wave on wave,
High, repercussive, till they sink and die,
As might the wavelets of the summer sea,
In sweetness, and transform themselves and flow
In some low gracious melody which sighs,
Fainter and fainter, to its perfect close,—
As 'twere the soaring, rapt, angelic choir
Which vanished in heaven's vault and left earth dumb
Of music, first the uplifted, pealing, high
Archangels' trumpets, then the chanting saints,
And then the faint child-angels' voices last.

MELIORA.

THE feeble folk wane through the ages, and careless the
Mighty ones smite them ;

Who is there that shall avenge the shedding of innocent blood?


Over the earth and the sea, the spoiler and slayer triumph,
Till the low sobs grow to a shriek, and the tears to
a flood.

Careless are they, the strong, secure of the fathomless
Future ;

As it has been shall it be even to the pitiless end.

In their dens, by the hills, or the sea, long ages the
bickering cave-men,

Armed with their sharpened flints, rob and ravish and
slay ;



The smoke of the Aztec victims steams up from the
Mexican altars,

And the quivering heart is torn by the priests from
the living breast ;

The bearded Assyrian treads on the necks of the van-
quished foemen ;

The shafts from the chariot pierce the huddled
wretches who fly.

On the tombs of the Nile's grave lords still marches the
doleful procession—

The captives go forth to swift death or the lifelong
doom of the slave.

Laurel-crowned, up the Capitol's steep the heavy-eyed
Cæsar advances ;

Splendid the triumph rolls by, with the fettered
captives behind ;

The half-famished lions leap forth on the sands of the
bloody arena,

And for ages no pitying thrill touches those merciless
hearts.

Through all time under African skies, the tyrant or slaver
oppresses ;

The red man slays and is slain on the limitless plains
of the West ;

Through the weary suffering Past, far and wide, by land
and o'er ocean,


The feeble are trampled down, and only the mighty
are blest.

Comes there no end of these things ? shall men murder
and ravage for ever ?

Shall not a mightier hand give to the desolate Peace ?

And thou, my Britain, unconquered, untrod by the foot
of the foeman,

Hast thou deep Peace indeed in thy borders, or
imminent strife ?



Thou who slayest the savage with bolts from thy murderous death-dealing engines,

And lettest thy children starve in the midst of plenty around,

Though to-day thou seemest at rest, shalt thou scorn the lesson of ages,

Singing thoughtless pæans of Peace in a time wherein no Peace is ?

When the graves of the slain lie thick, Lorraine, on thy vine-covered hillsides,


And the New World echoes and throbs with the stress of a fratricide strife ;

When the cry of the tortured for Christ rises up from ravaged Armenia,

And the murdered myriads appeal from the fiendish Moslem in vain ;

Maidens outraged, and teeming mothers cut open, the innocent children

Dashed to death on the stones of the street, or spared
for a crueller lust,
While strong Europe, too selfish to aid, is wrecked by
her useless battalions,
And the people, affrighted, shrink back from the
thought of the terrors to be ;
When fiends plot together in secret, driven mad by un-
reasoning hatred,
Flinging death and destruction unmoved, though 'tis
only the innocent bleed,
And groans of the strong men rise, who fain would
labour, but may not,
While their pale-faced children starve or rot in their
feverish dens ;—
What heart has a man to tell of an infinite ruth and
pity,
Whose ears are filled with the noise of the woes and
the sorrows around ?



Shall the common lot take thee too, O dear land, the
doom of the feeble,

When the strength that was thine is spent, and the
foemen beleaguer thee sore ?

Nay ; destroy not the reckless savage, who flings his rude
manhood against thee,

Whom thy pitiless engines mow down as a mower the
grass of the field.

But keep thou thy Power unassailed, and be just and
fear not the future ;


With equal and merciful laws make thou thy wide
Empire, rejoice !

Be to thy children a Mother, be they as brother to
brother,

Acting the precept divine which was taught by thy
Teacher and Lord ;

Let thy strong sons raise up thy weak, through a Christ-
like strength of compassion,

Bearing each other's burdens, and lightening each
other's woes ;
Let not the State any more turn with pitiless aspect
averted
From the sight of the people's pain, unheeding their
pitiful cry.
Scorn thou the pedants who prate of dead laws stern
and unbending,
Based only on selfish instincts, and spurning the
general good,
Knowing one limit alone to the Commonwealth's pro-
vince of mercy—
That no action of all shall mar the life-giving effort
of each.
Let thy Empire of self-governed men prove how weak is
the arm of the despot,
How mighty the sum of the strength of myriads
obeying the law.



Save thou the weak from themselves when strong temptations
assail them,

The curses of Greed and of Sloth, the Demons of Lust
and of Drink.

By patient toil without price, raise thou in the hearts of
the lowly

The white bloom of knowledge, to swell to wisdom's
ineffable fruit.

Destroy not the humble home, when the strength of the
worker has vanished,

And the young have gone from the nest, and the
cottage is silent and still.

Let the State, with wise providence, aid the faithful
servants of labour

To an honest wage for their toil, and relief from the
sorrows of age.

Raise the myriads of poor and cast-down from the
sloughs where to-day they languish,

Teach them the civic sense, their duty to man and to
God.

Join thou and thy children your strength, till the nations
learn the unreason,

The folly, the mischief, the crime of the murderous
evils of war ;


Let a stronger league of Peace dispel the jealous sus-
picions,

The angers, the senseless hates, which divide and
distract men to-day,

Till the Voice of Justice is heard, August, Inviolatè,
Awful,

Where now are the myriad cries of causeless passion
and hate ;

Then let the Judge ascend to his Throne, and the weak
and the strong be judged.



FROM A RUINED TOWER.

THE eyes of dreaming Fancy fall
On ivied tower and moss-grown wall,
And straightway o'er the unlovely Past
The glamour of Romance is cast.

Forth from the high portcullised gate
The knights and damsels ride in state,
The white plumes nod, the rich robes gleam,
Mail flashes like a sunlit stream.


And all that sordid story mean,
The sin, the suffering that have been,
The lifelong dungeons dark and foul,
The tortured limbs, the famished soul,

Fade from the self-deluded mind,
And eyes by wayward Fancy blind,
Till of the crime, the blood, the pain,
No faintest memories remain.

Ah ! wayward Fancy, turn from these
Fond dreams and bootless fantasies ;
Upon the living, not the dead,
Are golden rays of noontide shed.

The lives to-day of small and great
March onward to a nobler fate ;
Hopes higher, darker fears they hold,
Than those ignoble days of old.

The Present's wider, fuller life,
Its loftier aims, its keener strife,
Can deeper touch the yearning heart
To higher song and truer art.



And fairer still and nobler far
The glimpses of the Future are :
The race transfigured, wrong redressed,
Creation tending towards the Best.

And queenly Knowledge, thronèd fair,
Mistress alike of Earth and Air,
Crowned with a diadem of Peace,
Watches her boundless realms increase.

Turn, wayward Fancy, turn thine eye
From these false tales of chivalry ;
The Night is past, the Day begun,
Salute, acclaim the ascending Sun.

A PLEA FOR THE CHILDREN.

SHALL woman's pitying love

Its object seek in vain?

Comes there to-day our hearts to move

No hopeless, innocent pain?

The dull world speeds on its unbending course—

No law there seems but Force!—

And those whose tender hearts would seek


To aid the helpless weak,

Too oft, with folded hands, sit impotent

Waiting the dark event.

So loud the doubting voices are,


We scarce may stir at all,



Though at the shock of ruthless war
The young battalions fall !
Over all lands in vain
The toiling worker's pain
Speaks, with a terrible voice unheard,
Its awful Sibylline word !
Hardly we dare assuage
The ever-growing ills of Age,
Who, knowing how the lifelong sufferers live,
Know, too, how hard the task to wisely give.
The homes of healing languish for the gold
The rich, perplexed, withhold :
Since hardly may our minds discern the clue
To separate the false need from the true—
So hard to tell if that we strive to do
Make not the tangle worse,
And bring, indeed, no blessing, but a curse !

One cause there is, indeed—
Alas for all the Christian centuries !—
Calls clear from childish lives that bleed
With daily miseries.
Within a thousand homeless homes to-day
The sot, the savage, bear remorseless sway—
Vile souls, and hearts of stone !
With none to heed the helpless children moan—
Starved, beaten, prisoned, drugged, tormented, slain :
In life a burden, but in death a gain !


Shall these still suffer ? Shall the State's tired arm,
Too slow to save from harm,
Its dim eye, by a thousand cares, grown blind,
No willing helpers find ?
These little ones ! Shall they unaided pine ?
Who, fresh from the creative Hand Divine,



Bring to our sad, laborious earth
Bright memories of their birth !
Who 'neath a happier, juster fate
May give strong, willing workers to the State !
Here no doubt comes ; here is our duty plain :
Soothe, tender women, soothe their hopeless pain !
And trample, with a righteous anger strong,
This thrice accursèd wrong !

AD ANIMAM.

THEREFORE I said unto my Soul, " Rejoice,
Oh Soul, be comforted, for thou long time
Hast fared upon the snow-clad heights, and breathed
The icy mountain air, and watched the dawn
Steal upward from the Eastern rim, and marked
The silver shafts transmuted into gold
By the uprushing Sun, and oft alone,
Sole, unattended, save of thine own strength,
Above the slumbering cities seen the throngs
Wake the hushed streets, and heard the warring
sounds
Of joy and sorrow, birth and death, arise,
Blent in the sweet sad symphony of Life,



And the tired world revive. And thou hast smiled,
Flouting the aimless struggle from afar
On thy untrodden height, the stress, the toil,
And trouble of the Race ; dwelling apart
From wars and tribulations, and the clash
And jangle of opposing schools, convinced
That all alike were vain, and mocking all.


“ Nor hast thou bowed thee with hysteric zeal
At shrines which were not Reason's, casting down
The birthright of thy freedom and the gains
Of Man's long upward struggle, and the hope
Of his high-soaring Future, in the mire
At the priest's bidding, while the blinding fumes
Of the swung censers and the magic spell
Of Art and Music chained thee, eye and ear.
But standing cold, aloof, disdain'dst to kneel
Where the throng knelt, incredulous, alone.

“Nor hast thou wallowed in the sensual sty,
Nor known the fetters Youth and Dalliance
Bind round the nascent life, the mists of sense
Quenching youth’s pure white fire ; but by thy cell
And midnight lamp, Divine Philosophy
Sate grave, with clear cold eyes ; and wholesome
toil

Engrossed thy days and purged thee of all stain
Of sin, till thou, to godlike stature grown,
Didst spurn the grosser Earth.

Therefore, oh Soul,
Rejoice, and be thou glad.”

But not a word
Of answer came, but through the formless void,
Beyond the circuits of the faintest stars,
A thin wail, like the melancholy wind
Among the high-set pines or caverned rocks,



Hopeless, revoluble, reverberant,
And deepening to a groan, which seemed to say,
“ Oh, self-deceived, self-righteous, nothing worth,
And self-betrayed ! Oh, fool ! in vain ! in vain ! ”

A MODERN IDYLL.

I.


CROWNING the sapphire of our Southern sea
The white cliffs gleam. Above the dark pines rise
From purple heather. The clear autumn sky
Bears white winged cloudlets, drifting leisurely
Across the azure. A caressing breeze
Breathes upon sea and sky, and wakes the deep
To rippling laughter. All is calm and peace.
Calm the clear evening of untroubled lives,
As if no trumpet-blast of woe and pain
Might wake their slumbering depths and wreck their
 peace ;
And calm the aspect of the smiling sea,

As if no tempest ever lashed the surge
To thunder in the ocean caves, nor dashed
Strong ships to ruin, nor sowed the rocky walls
With undistinguished corpses of the dead.

Here on a golden August eve of old,
Two score of years ago, on that calm sea,
Churning the slumbering waters into foam,
A long black hull, trailing a cloud of smoke,
Throbbled swiftly to the West. 'Twas time of war,
And this a troopship from the neighbouring port
Laden with youthful lives, for whom swift Fate
Had come to change the frivolous daily round
Of strenuous idleness, the sloth, the rust
Of long ignoble peace for the wild joy
Of battle, the tame fields of common flowers
For the red rose of perilous enterprise
Which wounds the hand that grasps it. The great ship

Sped with its thousand hopes, its diverse fates
Of fame and golden ease, of death and pain,
The white thread with the black, the enchanted skein
Which weaves the mystic vesture of our lives.

There in a high cliff-garden, mute, alone,
A young girl sat, her head upon her hand ;
Her fair hair hid her brow, her cheek was pale.
Shyly, she waved her handkerchief, then flushed,
Marking an answering signal from the deck,
“Farewell, dear heart, farewell.” Then the ship passed,
But still she watched. At last the western cape
Shut out the view, and then she dropped her eyes,
Sobbing ; and on the unbounded ocean plains
And on the high-set downs and misty leas,
And painted glories of the autumnal flowers,
Smooth laurel and the feathery tamarisk,
The swift gloom fell, and left her weeping there.



Then when the twilight fell, and a cool breeze
Breathed from the sea, shivering, but not with cold,
She rose, a tall young figure, lithe and slim,
Crowned with the crown of youth, and health and grace
And innocence ; and to the new-lit house
She stole, and softly up the noiseless stair
Sped to her maiden chamber ; knelt awhile
In speechless prayer, then bathing her sad eyes
To hide the tell-tale tears, in virgin white,
Lit by one blushing rose, descended slow
To where the din, confused, of eager talk
Burst from the opened door ; and, scarce perceived,
Passed like a breathing statue, and feigned to smile
And seemed to share the polished trivial themes
Of books and pictures, plays and politics ;
And, always smiling, listened ; till the talk
Turned to the war and its quick coming ills,
And, since none knew her secret, all the fears


Of trouble, the strong forces of the foe,
The dread of coming pestilence, the strength
Of the great fortress, all the miseries
Of frozen winter on the unsheltered heights—
A hundred presages of ill. At last
One, turning to her, marked her ashy face,
Pale lips, and closing eyes, as, faint and white,
She sank upon her chair. Soon with forced smiles
And slow-reviving pulse, she rose and went,
Vowing 'twas nothing but the heat, the glare
Of the long cloudless day, and, scorning aid,
Swept slowly to her room, and there within
The locked door swooned, and fell prone on her bed,
And lay long time unconscious ; then again
Revived, but from her mother's soothing hand
And kiss and tender words of comfort shrank,
Locking her fateful secret in her heart.

Sweet Amy Howard, opening like a rose
In youth's enchanted air, to the gay town
Came forty Mays ago, and there she took,
The darling of an old patrician home,
Whatever innocent pleasure might await
The happy young. The Court's high pageantries
Opened swift doors to her. The snowy plumes
Crowning the girlish head, the glittering gems,
The flowers, the costly robes, the stately trains ;
Tragedy's cleansing tears : the singer's voice
Thrilling the stately throng, the streets aglow
With gliding lights, the whirling dances sweet
Fainting with dawn, the brief hushed hours of rest,
And happy dreams ; the ambling cavalcade
Through the brisk morn beneath the scented limes ;
The vernal harvest of the fictive hand
On canvass or in stone ; the clustering blooms
In thronged marquees ; the martial melodies,

Rising and falling 'mid the courtly crowd
On smooth pleached lawns ; the flower-hung barges,
moored

On the cool stream to watch the flashing oars
Through sweet June days ; the sheen of straining limbs
Flashing like lightning by ; the rippling flow
Of youthful laughter, when the rich and fair
Met with each joyous day ;—all these were hers
One summer long ago. And then the dream
Faded in grosser day, and that clear sky
Was veiled with cloud, and on that youthful life
There passed the first grey shadow of the unknown.


For that strong primal passion which inspired
Man's voice when Time was young—in the old East,
Beneath the desert stars, old Greece, old Rome,
As now in populous cities, North and South,
In all the countryside, by hill and dale,



In this grey teeming London of our love,—
Had swept her chords of life and played on them
The old mysterious music, blinding sweet,
Which takes young hearts ; the melody of Pan
Which floods the listening soul, and leaves it deaf
Thenceforth to lower tones. This taking her,
Silenced the strains of mirth, and turned the girl
To woman, though the face and form were young—
A woman knowing care.

But he to whom she gave her girlish heart
Was worthy of her—a young soldier bold,
Careless and pleasure-loving, yet untouched
By grosser sense ; the scion of a house
High born, yet unennobled as the use
Of rural England is, whereon the load
Of long-inherited burdens bears so hard,
That while the eldest born alone is set


In lifelong ease, the rest the happier lot
Of Labour takes, and by the sword, the pen,
Or ventures of the mart, they gain with toil
What the wise law denies them. So it came
That this young soldier, knowing well what need
Constrained him, to his father's counsels sage,
That he should only mate with hoarded gold
(Since not as yet he knew the power of love),
Consented, and among the joyous throng
Fluttered long time a careless butterfly,
Yet lighted on no bloom. Till one blest night
Of summer, 'mid the flower-decked dance, he saw,
Herself the fairest flower, a girlish form,
Lithe, clad in virgin white, with eyes of blue,
Sweep by him, and their glances met, and then
No longer might his careless fancy roam
To others, nor the maiden keep her troth
Unplighted more, so strong an influence
Bound each to each, its name, Required Love.



So through the flying summer days and nights
They met and grew together, till their souls,
Fused in one common essence, lived no more
Their separate lives ; with vows unuttered yet,
Deep graven on their hearts, but since the lack
Of riches vexed them, never by the lips
A word of love was spoken, yet no less
Their troth was plighted by a thousand signs
And hidden bonds. Amid the careless crowd
Careless they moved, nor might the Argus eyes
Of women trace their secret, yet they knew
Themselves fast bound, though seeming to be free.

Then one day on those happy fateful days,
Careless no longer, rose a sudden storm
Out of the distant East, the trump of war
Breaking the age-long peace. A thousand homes
In happy rural England heard the sound,

And shivered for the dear ones of their love—
Sons, brothers, lovers. All the lightsome thoughts
Of the old joyous life vanished and gone ;
Fled were the careless hours, the music mute,
The feasts, the dances done. But ere it came
The soldier's ardent heart broke forth in words
Which spoke his love. What answer could she make,
Who knew it long ago? Her heart was his,
And had been from the first. So these young lives
Were plighted each to each, and 'mid the chill
Of parting and impending trouble glowed
With that fine inner light which doth illumine
Those happier souls which 'mid life's gathered clouds
Find their long missing and divided selves
And grow complete. What was to them the gloom
Of swift descending night which hid the East,
The crash of nations, hurled together and wrecked
In deadly fight? Amid the storm, the frown




Of that embattled sky, one little ray,
One little golden glory of the heavens,
The secret knowledge of their mutual love,
Crowned them with halcyon calm, like that which lies
Deep in the heart of the vexed hurricane.

So the swift days fled on. Dark and more dark
The storm-cloud lowered ; louder and yet more loud
The thunder roll of war.

At last it came,
The voice of Fate, and he who heard with joy
The order that he longed for, which should bring
The chance of Fame and, higher, dearer far,
The voice of Duty, calling him to spend
His life for England, took a bold resolve
And told his dear. He dared not face as yet
His father's baffled hopes, which looked for gold
To build the shattered fortunes of his house,

Nor leave his love unplighted, for whose hand
A score of suitors pleaded. So at last
He prayed his love, if only ere they went,
They should be wed in secret. Long the maid
Doubted, for though she lived her life alone,
She would not wed another, and her heart
Abhorred concealment. Last, in trustfulness
And pure, ungrudging love, she put aside
Her maiden fears, and then one morn they stole
To some near church, and there, with none of kin
As witness of the rite, half blind with tears,
Yet all in love, she heard the priest pronounce
The solemn words which bound their lives in one ;
And at the porch, parting with one long kiss,
They went their ways, and all was as before
To outward eyes, though a deep sense of change
Had passed upon their lives transmuting all—
The young man, graver from his doubled life ;
The wedded maid, a bride, but not a wife.




Nor met they more. She to her father's house
Went by the Southern sea ; he presently
Whither his duty called him, till that eve
When his stout ship passed to the West, and left,
On that high cliff, his maiden wife alone.

II.

The swift days fled, the earlier autumn waned
To later, when the harvest fields grew bare
And the year past its prime. On that young heart
Fell an autumnal sadness, brooding deep
Upon her day and night. Her cheek grew pale,
While, shrinking from the careless joys which once
Allured, in silent musings she would spend
Her recluse days. Only her mother's voice
She loved, and she who marked her day by day
Fading, grew anxious for her, questioning


What thing had been, if haply she might find
Some solace for her pain. But not a word
Her shy soul dared to speak ; for day by day
She scanned the journals, but no news would come
Save vague reports alone. At last they told
How, sudden from the City of the Turk,
The great Armada sailed, and then the news
How, after forty years of peace, once more
Climbing the volleying hillsides from the vines,
Our England's columns charged the guns and drove
The enemy in flight. Her heart stood still,
Reading the fateful list of those who fell
Wounded or slain. But the reviving hope,
The vivid glow of undefeated youth
Flushed her pale cheek ; for not 'mid these sad lists
Found she the one dear name, but ranged with theirs
Whom for sheer daring with the coveted Cross
The General rewarded. He had borne



The colours up the hill, braving the fire
Of half a hundred guns, when others fell,
'Scaping without a wound. 'Twas he whose hand
Shot the tall Russian dead, whose lifted sword
Had cut the Ensign down. 'Twas he who nursed
The wounded lad to life. Then her fond heart,
A little chilled by bloodshed, flushed with pride
For him who was her husband, and that night
The old fire lit her cheek, her eyes, and gave
New spirit to her voice, till as of yore
She seemed again the bright and joyous girl
Who in high summer, scarce three months ago,
Lit the old home with innocent mirth and song
Uncaring, and her mother's heart was glad.

But when the days grew short, and the spent year
Was dying fast, came news of dull delays
And how the tide of war, leaving the plains


And hard-won heights, broke in a surge of blood
Round the beleaguered fortress. Then, when now
The thick fogs hid the sea and blurred the land
In dull November, came the fateful tale
Of furious storms, driving to wreck the ships
Laden with food and shelter, stubborn fight
Fought through the mist, each man for his own hand,
"The soldiers' battle," and her heart stood still,
Fearing the voice of Fate. But though once more,
Amid the dreadful sum of blood and death,
Came news that he was safe, the gathering sum
Of daily growing miseries, want and cold,
Disease and hunger, vexed her, till the girl
Could bear no more suspense, nor anxious care,
Nor longer sit in idle luxury,
While he perhaps lay dying, calling for her
To soothe his pain. This thought, recurring still,
Tormented her long time ; till at the last,



When every journal told its harrowing tale
Of suffering, she took a stern resolve :
She bared to those she loved her secret grief,
And prayed consent to go where she might gain
To tend her husband. Not her father's voice
Of prudent counsel, nor her mother's love,
Nor any maiden dread of war and pain
Or danger moved her. When they bade her dream
No longer of her madness, she locked fast
Her purpose in her breast. And one sad morn,
Before the loitering dawn she stole away,
Leaving with tears her childhood's cherished home,
The parents of her love, her girlish friends,
White bed and dainty room, her books, her flowers—
All things that made life sweet ; passed to the town,
Taking her little store of gems and gold,
And setting on her pillow a brief note :
“ Forgive me, mother. Duty bids me go.

My place is with my husband. He has need
Of tender care, and I will seek him out
If he still lives. Fear not for me ; I go
Hoping to join the noble new-formed band
Of ministering women. If my skill
Is wanting now, yet I may gain in time
To help him or his comrades, whom sad Fate
Condemns to pain. Fear not, 'tis better so ;
I should go mad to sit at home and think
That we should meet no more. But now I know,
So sure a presage occupies my mind,
That he shall owe to me returning life
And health ; no more I know, nor seek to know,
But so I gain to save him, all is well."


So ere the wintry day began to close
In dreary twilight, to the gloomy town—
Not the gay town of summer past and gone,



But dark with choking mists—she passed, and there
Besought the gracious women who went forth
To that new work of mercy, strange to them,
Familiar now, if only she might share
Their blessed task, and with the strength of love
Grown eloquent, prevailed, and to the ship
Which soon should sail betook her. Not the tears
Of those she loved, who came in haste and strove
To bend her purpose, moved her. So at last,
Down the rude wintry channel, tossed the ship,
Passing the pines, the heather, withered now ;
Passing the well-known cliffs, the towers of home
And that high garden where, three brief months since,
She sat a girl pining in luxury,
And watched the strong ship fading in the West
That bore her life away. The strong god Love
Had nerved the girlish heart and braced her soul
To high resolve, so that the wintry wave,

The weary days of storm and stress and gloom,
The strangers' faces round, affrighted not.
Till, passing through the lion-guarded gates
Into the Middle Sea, and by the blue
Sicilian straits, and many a classic shore
And fairy islet of the purple deep,
She felt her heart beat faster as she saw,
Crowning the Golden Horn the minarets
Of Stamboul, knowing well her love had passed
The self-same way before, and wondering much
If there he lay wounded in some fierce fight
Longing for her, or if indeed he lived
Unwounded still, or mouldering, perchance,
Upon the frozen, bleak Crimean plain,
Dead of disease or cold or suffering, dead
In battle slain, a bullet through his heart.

Now when the ship cast anchor, and gave forth,
Thronging the narrow, ill-paved city streets,



That band of pitiful women, her first thought
Was of her love ; and when they gained at last
The palace where the sick and wounded pined,
Brought from the front by sea, shyly she asked
If he were with the rest. But when she learned
He had no hurt indeed, but on the field
Was marked for higher rank, with thankful heart
She wrote to tell him what had been, and prayed
Forgiveness, and, if haply it might be,
That she might come to him, or if indeed
That might not be, she in the hospital
Would live content, amid the duteous throng
Of English nurses ; only this she prayed
That he would send one little word of love,
And she would ask no more, only to hear
That he was well.

But when her husband knew
All that had been, and that his maiden bride,

That careless, delicate child, so lately won,
Toiled uncompanioned 'mid the thousand woes
Of ruthless war, his heart, so light before,
Grew heavy in him, knowing not what fate
Might yet befall. Yet since he loved her well,
A passionate longing filled the young man's heart
To embrace his dear, and be with her and smooth
The hardships which she faced for him—ay, though
Through sickness and through wounds ; and so he wrote
A letter in his tent, when the day's tale
Of labour and of danger now was done ;
A letter full of love : how he was well,
Unwounded, happy ; yet would give his health
And scatheless limbs, if only he might feel,
Paying the price of sickness or of wounds,
The touch of her soft hand, and see her stoop
To kiss him as he lay.


But as he closed

The letter, through the night above, the shrill
Scream of a hurtling shell, then a loud crash.
Nor knew he more, and the new-written page
Fell from his hand, torn, crushed, and blurred with
blood.

III.

Then for that yearning, unrewarded heart
There came the weary days of endless toil ;
The unaccustomed cares, the sleepless nights,
Or scarce-snatched slumbers ending ere the dawn ;
The sordid offices ; the delicate hands,
Dressing the festering wounds ; the cries and groans
Worse than the battle's, the coarse sights which shocked
The maiden's innocent eyes, the maniac shouts
Of some poor fevered brain, the blasphemies
Of desperate sufferers, the surgeon's knife,


The blood, the shrieks of pain, till came at last
Deep stillness, and the tortured figure lay
Shrouded with folded hands, until they came
Quickly and bore him forth, and on his bed
Was laid another. All her tender heart
Bled for the unsuspected miseries
Of human life ; her innocent eyes o'erflowed
For daily, nightly woes, yet not the less
She bore to give what aid of soothing hand
And kindly word her girlish want of skill
Might lend the wounded. Were they not like him,
Soldiers with none to tend them, love or wife ?
How could she better show the love she bore
To him who was her life than tending those
Who were his comrades ? So she steeled her heart
To sights and sounds of misery, put aside
Her maidenly disgust, and toiled to assuage
The hopeless sum of woe. One fair-haired lad



In helpless pain, and wandering in dreams,
Muttered the name she loved, and when he woke
Was tireless in his praise. Thenceforth she seemed
To have a friend again, and eager heard
How brave he was and tender ; how he bore
The stripling out of fire, and came for him
When the fierce fight was done ; and how the foe
Was stubborn, and the struggle hard, and since
The wounded might not bear the bitter cold
Of those unsheltered heights, the transports brought
Their load of helpless suffering week by week
To those warm palace halls. She hearing all,
Seemed to grow nearer to her love, and share
His daily fortunes ; and she tended well
The grateful youth with daily, nightly care,
Wrote shyly to his mother and his love,
And learnt how thin the fence which rank and gold
Set between man and man, and how the bond

That binds the highborn, binds the lowly too
In precious kinship.


But no answering word
Came from her dear, and heavier every day
The load of anxious doubt, unexorcised,
Pressed on her, as her cheek grew pale, and all
The weight of hopeless service bore on her
Too heavy for her strength. The menial tasks,
Light while Hope gilded Duty, seemed to grow
Heavier with every day that failed to bring
News of her love ; but she toiled bravely on
Amid those dreadful sights and sounds, nor sought
To shrink from them. But when the great ships passed
Beneath the windows with their piteous freight
Of wounded, who a few brief months before
Sailed full of life and hope, her anxious mind,
Not knowing what to hope, whether 'twere best
He came with them, that she might nurse him back



To life and health, or else, unhurt, alone
(If haply still he breathed this earthly air),
And far removed from her, should wait the fall
Of the great fortress and the crowning fight,
When Death should claim his thousands. But no news
Came, nor amid those close thronged halls of pain,
Perplexed 'twixt joy and grief, she saw his face.

Then one day when her soul was sick with fear,
A letter from the Camp! writ by a hand
She knew not. As she opened it there fell
From the enclosing page a fragment, torn
And stained with blood, in that familiar hand
She loved so well. Her heart stood still to mark
Those crimson stains, and yet it seemed to say
That all was well with him, her love, her dear,
Her husband. Every stained and blotted word,
With Love's swift divination, she devoured,

Yet could not understand. At last she turned
To his who sent those dear, torn, blotted lines,
And learnt the truth. "He found his comrade lie
Bleeding upon the ground, and by him lay
Amid the ruins of their shattered home
The fragments that he sent. 'Twas weeks ago,
And he had hovered long 'twixt life and death,
Tended by comrades, and too weak till then
To join the rest who left those frozen fields
For the warm city. But now his many wounds,
Which were not deep, nor maiming face or limb,
Were mending slowly, and he hoped to sail
When next the mournful harvest of the war
Left the bleak snow-clad heights." She, reading this,
Dissolved in love and grateful that her dear
Was spared to her, felt a new spring of life
Course through her. Then she told the youth she
nursed,



Within whose youthful veins Life's reflux tide
Glowed once again ; and on the crowded quay
As the ship glided in they stood, and there
She, in her sombre habit like a nun,
Found him she sought ; and he with a wan smile
And feeble grasp greeted her, and they kissed,
And then his tired eyes closed.


But oh, how weak

He seemed, how ashy grey his cheek, how thin
The accents of his voice, which were so deep
And manly ! As she looked, the rising tears
Blotted her sight—tears half of happiness
And half of pity. To the hospital
They passed, and she, fired with a new-born hope,
Spent happy days and nights beside his bed,
Drawing him back to life, and when at last
The ebbing tide returned, and he grew strong
And stronger day by day, there was no soul

In all those crowded halls so blithe as hers
Who was his wife.

Then one day when her cares
Were well nigh ended, from the house of pain
They went together to a pleasant home
By the Sweet Waters. Flowers of early spring
Lit the dry, rustling woods where autumn leaves
Lay scattered thickly still, and through the boughs
Blue river-reaches, flecked with glancing sails,
Smiled on them. There they gained in the new joy
Of bursting life to lose the sordid stains
Of pain and woe. Each sunny day that passed
Brought its own store of strength for him who late
Lay bleeding, and he blest the loving care
Of his dear nurse.


Amid that vernal air
She tended him, and a sweet time of peace
And tender love dawned for those sore-tried lives—



A little time, too brief ! For as his strength
Grew greater, and no more the soldier lay
Prostrate upon his bed, but once again
With slow-paced footsteps, leaning on her arm,
Wandered along the banks of the blue stream—
Two wedded lovers, weaving fairy tales
Of what the years should bring—his loving eyes
Woke suddenly one day, and marked how frail
His girl-wife showed, how thin the pallid cheek,
How deep the hectic rose, how bright the eyes,
And with a bitter pang his conscious mind
Knew what should be. For every day that passed
Weak and more weak, despite her happiness
And recompense of love, she showed, and soon,
When now he walked again in nascent strength,
No longer on her arm he leant for aid,
But she on his, and presently he went
Alone, while she, reclining, in the sun

Hoarding her fast-decreasing sum of strength,
Lay still as death, greeting him with a smile.


So the swift weeks passed onwards equably,
Brief happy weeks, the one reprieved from death,
The other doomed to die. The air grew soft
With fuller Spring. Again the trees grew green,
The bursting woods, the fields a maze of flowers ;
Soft breezes fanned the stream, and the pale cheek
Of her whose young life toils and cares and fears
And sleepless vigils 'mid polluted air
Had sapped ; for whom her happiness had come
Too late to save, only in time to make
The end more bitter. Ere the swift Spring passed
To summer, the hidden fever in her blood,
Which long had smouldered, broke in open flame
And burned that fragile house of life, and left
But half-cold ashes, till the appointed hour,



After brief days of suffering, when her Love,
Requiting well her tender care, and strong
In body though weak in heart, heard her lips say :
“ Dear, it is hard to part. But I have been
Happier to find the rugged thorny path
Of Duty hidden in flowers, than when I knew
The old smooth ways of ease. Lay me at rest
Here among English graves in this blest place
Where I have learnt to live. Ask for my fault
Forgiveness of my mother and my sire,
Whom I have disobeyed, and bid them think
Tenderly of their daughter. When the war
Is ended, and you pass again the cliffs
Of England, and the garden 'midst the pines
Where once—was it years since, or yesterday ?—
I watched you go, taking my heart, my youth,
My life with you, say a brief prayer for me,
Your maiden-wife. Then if you will, forget ;
Or if you will, remember.”

Then she breathed
Her last within his arms, and he with tears,
And one last kiss of parting, closed her eyes.

They laid her in the place she would, amidst
The Christian dead. Upon the hills the tall
Black cypress-spires mark where the maiden lies,
And from the minarets the Muezzin calls
To prayer, where yet the resonant peals shall sound
For Christian worship, when the accursed hordes
Of lust and murder which to-day defile
The garden of the earth are driven in shame
Back to their native wastes. A thousand names
Of English dead, each in its scanty plot
Of alien earth, lie round her, where she waits,
Poor faithful child, the peal that calls to life!




IV.

But when the last sad offices were done
The soldier sought to lay the ghost of grief
Through Duty. To the Camp once more he bent
His willing feet. The comrades whom he left
And Fortune spared, welcomed the grave sad man,
Who from his new and secret sorrow turned
To the old task, and careless, facing Death,
Bore a charmed life. Day after day he fought
Amid the van, unscathed, nor seemed to heed
Whatever Fate might send, and with him went,
Following in every perilous enterprise,
The fair-haired lad whom from that earlier fight
He bore to safety, and his girl-wife nursed,
Dying herself, to life.

Then by degrees
The perils of each day, the abounding life,


The glow, the glory of successful war
Worked their sure work. Slowly he put from him
The load of blank regret, and seemed again—
A little graver than of old maybe—
A soldier as before. His comrades' voice
Acclaimed his fearless daring, yet he seemed
More pitiful than before. His hand would spare
The weakling ; oft in act to shoot or strike
He dropped his arm, his Love's imploring eyes
Seeming to turn on him, fulfilled his soul
With ruth and pity. Slow the weary war
Dragged to its end ; closer and closer crept
The encircling lines ; a scorpion ringed with fire
The Fortress stung. Then came the fierce assault
When thousands fell, but he was scatheless still
Even as at first. And last the fateful morn
When amid thundering shocks, fort after fort
By its defenders' suicidal hands



Leapt to the skies, and, amid smoke and flame,
The strong fleet, trapped within the harbour, sank
Or flared in ruin, and the Power of Ill,
Which throws to-day its shield above the Turk,
Stepped between him and righteous doom ; and she,
Our blindfold England, fought and did prevail
For a mistaken end, where victory
Was deadlier than defeat. In those dark days,
Yet glorious too, that strenuous stricken soul,
Unquestioning, did well his soldier's work,
And when Peace came, though all but duty seemed
Lost in that early grave, was crowned with rank
And honour and fame, a leader among men.

But when they left those blood-stained heights and set
Their faces homewards, one brief week he gained
To tarry with his love. The turf was green
Already on her grave, and summer flowers


Lighted it. There he set a marble cross
Above her, with her name, and the scant sum
Of her brief earthly years. Even as he gazed
The Past came back to him, the sad, sweet Past,
A little dimmed already by long months
Of daily fateful war. And then he went,
Wearing one pure white rose upon his breast,
Plucked from her resting-place, to join the throng
Of comrades homeward-bound. The great ship passed
From sea to sea, leaving the windless South
With its deep purples, for the long grey roll
Of the Atlantic surge ; green orange groves
And vine-hung slopes, for heather and thymy downs
In England. Last, one day his watching eyes
Knew once again the well-remembered cliff
Crowned with dark pines, and on its seaward edge
A garden bright with flowers ; and all the past
Blossomed anew within him as he saw,



Unchanged, the high-built turrets of her home,
Who filled his heart. Almost his straining eyes
Seemed once again to mark a white-robed form
Wave her farewell. But ah ! her long farewell
Was months ago, and they had parted since
Who now should meet no more ! And then his thought
Turned to his plighted word. He did not kneel,
But, standing, breathed a silent thanksgiving,
That loving her, he had been loved again,
And, as she asked of him, such prayer as comes
For those we love and lose—a wordless hope
That it is well with them where'er the Unknown
Holds them within His boundless waste of worlds,
And when this pilgrimage of life is done
That those who loved on earth may love in heaven.

And then the salutary toil which brings
An antidote to grief, the daily growth


Of Life's broad tree, driving its roots deep down
In homely earth, lifting its crest to heaven,
With fruit and blossom crowned—no fragile flower,
But with a thousand thick-leaved branches strong
For rest or shelter—o'er that sore-tried soul
Spread its protecting shade ; and honour of men
And tranquil wedded years, and childish hands,
And once again, hard-fought, successful war
In the far East, and waning years absorbed
In homely leisure, 'mid the cherished fields
Of long-fled youth ;—obscured that precious dream
And half-remembered grave, and that young life
Given for his own. But in the wakeful night
Before the dawn, or when his children sit
Around his board, or in the joyous dance
At Yuletide, when another Amy whirls,
White-robed like her of yore, and smiles on him,
Her grandsire,—to the old man's dreaming thought



Scenes which those young lives knew not rise again
Before his yearning eyes :—that dear, dead Past,
That girlish form waving a fond farewell,
That tender, loving care, that early grave,
Fill once again his eyes, thin as a dream,
Not all unhappy ; and the Present wanes,
Lost in the glamour of the vanished Past.

Thin as a dream ! But what is all our life
But dreamlike—nay, a dream ? And yet 'tis well
To have dreamt it. One day, waking with the Dawn
In some strange sphere, where Time nor Change
disturbs,
Nor dust nor noise of Life, but still and bright,
The vanished Beauty of the Past revives ;
The long-drowned silent Music wakes again
In that ethereal calm ; our souls shall take,
Clear as of old, the pageant of their lives

On the old earth ; unfading memories
Of joy and pain, sorrow and sacrifice,
Precious and unforgotten ; all the store
Of shining thoughts and deeds, pure gems undimmed
Of the old treasure-house, and best of all
To deck the enfranchised Soul to meet her King,
The priceless jewel of undying Love.



AH! WHAT IS TRUTH? `

AH! what is Truth? Our failing eyes

Pursue in vain the fleeting light ;

Beyond the darkening hills it flies,

And ere we gain it, lo! the night.

And what is Knowledge? But a gleam

Which serves the encircling gloom to mark,

A little light, a feeble spark,

A phantasy, a bootless dream.

And what is Faith? A mounting fire

That through the black vault heavenward burns ;

A force which struggles to aspire,

Then, sudden quenched, to earth returns.

The night draws near, the night is here,

Our feeble lanterns wane and die

But, on the illimitable sphere

New suns unnumbered light the sky.

REGINA CŒLI.

WHAT shall I frame my life to gain?

Not Riches ; lower mundane things

Spread wide their fickle treacherous wings,

And who pursues them strives in vain.

Nor Fame ; for she fleets faster yet,

Or comes not ere the closing tomb

The sun of Glory sets in gloom,

And the world hastens to forget.

Nor Rank nor Honours. Were it best

Dowered of some weaker soul to live,

Or bear the jewel none can give


Deep in the heart, not on the breast?

Nor Pleasure ; for her gains elude
The weary seeker's baffled eyes ;
The wanton leaves him when she flies
Bound fast in hopeless servitude.

Nor Love, because its flower divine
Blooms with the Morn, nor long can stay,
But withers in Life's fuller day
And leaves the lonely heart to pine.

Nor Beauty ; though the fictive hand
Fix some faint glimpses, Time the thief
Cries, "Art is long, and Life is brief,"
And slays us ere we understand.

Nor Learning ; for her laboured page
Palls on the soul which nears the Truth ;
The thirst for fame, the haste of Youth
Stir not the slower limbs of Age.



To Duty only let me kneel,
Her painful circlet on her brow !
To her, my Queen, my head shall bow,
Not knowing, but content to feel !

All faint, all fade, all pass, but She
Shines clear for young and agèd eyes,
High as the peaks which kiss the skies,
Profound as the unfathomed sea !

IN THE DARK EAST.

AUGUST 8, 1895.

In peaceful slumbers deep,
Far from their homes away,
The Martyrs lie asleep,
Waiting the Day.

No dream of ill alarms
Those faithful souls and pure ;
Within the Eternal arms
They rest secure.

The father's loving care,
The gentle mother mild,
Boyhood and girlhood fair,
The little child,

Young maids who yearn to spread
Faith in the Holy Name
Through old lands sunk and dead
In secular shame ;

Contented to expend
Dark, half-despairing days,
If haply at the end,
From prayer and praise,

Slow labour seeming vain,
And lifelong effort given,
At last their toil may gain
One soul for heaven.

Then on the peaceful hush,
With ingrate curses loud,
Bursts with a roar and rush
The murderous crowd.


And then fond hearts that break,
And agonized, struggling breath,
The sword, the fiery stake,
Torture and death.

* * * *

Great God ! Beneath Thy sun
When shall Thy Martyrs cease ?
When shall Thy will be done,
Thy world at peace ?

Nigh nineteen hundred years
Since last Thou spak'st are gone,
And yet through blood and tears
Thy Saints march on.

Fulfil Thyself with might,
Confirm our strivings weak ;
Shine forth, ineffable Light ;
Oh, still Voice, speak !



For now, as of old time,
Men for Thy honour die,
Triumphant wrong and crime
Affront Thine Eye.

The unbelievers still,
Fierce as the ravening beast,
With lust and murder fill
Thy hopeless East.

Arise ! avenge Thy slain !
Make a full end, O Lord !
Dispel this age-long pain,
Strike with Thy Word !

THE TRUE STORY OF DAMON AND
PYTHIAS.


Two senators there were of Syracuse,
When Dionysius the tyrant seized
The reins of State, austere, of high repute,
Still faithful to the fallen Commonwealth
The young usurper slew. In closest links
Of friendship lived the twain, whom not the bonds
Of wedlock, nor the cares of fuller life,
The love of children, the dividing power
Of high ambition severed ; but their souls,
Close-knit together, still from youth to age
Kept the old tie, so strong a golden chain
Bound them together, stronger than the love

Of wife and child, stronger than Life itself,
Stronger than Death—the bond of common Faith.

For they, four centuries before Christ came,
Following the mystic precepts of the sage
Pythagoras, who, Saint at once and seer,
Taught, as our Master taught, the love of man
(Not all the erring Race, both small and great,
As He, but of the faithful Brotherhood),
Contemned the Pagan worship, knowing well
Wisdom and virtue and the mastery
Of slavish lusts came not of acted rite
Or incense, or the steam of sacrifice
And suppliant hands uplifted to dead gods,
But of the subtle music which attunes
The chords of life to gracious Harmony.

Wherefore a secret Order of the wise
He founded, and a Brotherhood of love,

Where each with each, toiling and suffering,
Bearing his Brother's burden, might at last
Rise to pure heights of gracious sacrifice
And self-surrender, each contending voice
Lost in the general Harmony of all.
And, therefore, if a Brother of his Rule
Fell fainting on the stony ways of life,
The Sage commanded that his Brethren bore
What succour they might give ; and if he lay
Sick among strangers, helpless, suffering, poor,
And friendless, that the Brethren seeking him
Should of their sacred Duty pay again
Whatever gold or labour for his need
The stranger spent ; or if a Brother pined
In jeopardy of life, his Brother's arm
Should shield him, ay, though Death itself repaid
The pious care. Thus each in each was lost,
Bearing each other's burdens, till their lives




The True Story of Damon and Pythias. 81

Swelled the great concord, bearing, suffering,
Rejoicing, till their pilgrimage was done,
And they, through loftier spheres ascending, took
A higher nature, rising grade by grade
Of pureness, till at last the heavy load
And burden of the flesh, this mortal coil,
Which weighed them down, fell from them and they
soared
From sphere to higher sphere, enfranchised, purged,
To some blest place of incorporeal souls.

Now, since through all the isle, from sea to sea,
The fame of their close friendship yearly grew,
Till all men knew and wondered what high force
Inspired their lives, soon to the tyrant's ear
The knowledge came ; and he, who loved indeed
The accents of August Philosophy,
Though lust of power and gold had led his feet

Through miry swamps and thorny difficult ways,
Incredulous heard. To that self-seeking soul
The tales of high ungrudging sacrifice
Seemed idle phantasies, unproved, untrue,
Too thin for earth ; and yet because his mind
Was set on Knowledge, for herself, he longed
To test them. Therefore gave he word to some,
His parasites, that he was fain to try
This faithful friendship and the link that bound
Their lives : “ For though Pythagoras himself
Bade him believe, he would not, well he knew
Men’s selfish hearts, bent upon narrow ends
Caring for naught beside. What was it gained
High place for him and honour, power and wealth,
When little more than youth, but selfish ends,
Sought without ruth for others, and achieved
While all men envied ? Had it been indeed
A brother in the flesh, of the same stock,



The True Story of Damon and Pythias. 83

Born of the self-same womb, perhaps 'twere well
To cleave to him, so that the union brought
Nothing of loss. But men of alien blood,
Bound by no closer tie than common faith,
That such should cling together to loss of goods—
Nay more, of life ! The pious hypocrites !
'Twas time they were unveiled."

Therefore he bade

His creatures swear an oath that Pythias
Plotted his death. It mattered not a whit
'Twas but a lie, for if he found no friend
To die for him, 'twere one malignant less,
Or if he should, then two. Therefore they brought
Their accusation, and the innocent
Was doomed to die. But when he heard his fate,
Scorning the usurper's power, ere the axe fell
The tyrant of his cruel subtlety
Offered this grace, that he might bid farewell

To wife and children. When his yearning heart,
Spite of himself, consented, with a sneer
The tyrant cried, "Ay, thou shalt go indeed
If thou canst find a friend to die for thee
At sunset, if thou comest not again.
Hast thou a friend among thy Brotherhood
Of hypocrites to risk his life for thine?
Let him stand forth, and thou shalt have thy wish.
See, it wants six hours now to set of sun;
Go, but of this be sure, whate'er the cause
If thou return not ere his latest rays
Sink on the western hills, thy brainless friend
Shall die for thee. Will any bear the risk?
Let him stand forth!"

Then Damon, who stood by,
Sorrowing, to see the end, stood forth and cried,
"I will be bound for him, and if he come not
Will die the death." Quickly the gaoler loosed

The prisoner's chains and fixed on Damon's limbs
Their heavy burdens. And without a word,
Only a grateful gesture, Pythias turned,
Took horse, and through the echoing city streets,
Past pillared temples, marble palaces,
And sounding colonnades—the tyrant's work,
Built on the city's ruined liberties—
Flew like the wind amid the wondering crowds
Of citizens, then left the town behind,
And past the trellised vineyards and the fields
Of waving grain, along the curving shore
By town and hamlet flew. The laughing sea,
Flecked with the widespread wings of dancing boats,
Spread blue before him ; far upon the sky
Ætna's enormous bulk ; the silent ways
Echoed the beating horse-hoofs, and his brain,
One sad unceasing monotone of sound,
One thought repeated oft, “ At set of sun


Thou diest," and again : " At set of sun,
Remember ! time is short ; it flies ! it flies !"
" Before yon sun has set thy life is done,
Or else thy friend's." " Speed on." Until at last
The old familiar fields and walls of home.

Now, when he gained his well-loved palace gate
His slave came forth, Lucullus, whom his hand
Had cherished since his birth, bound by close ties
Of loving service, and he bade him take
His steed and tend him with all care, because
Ere sunset he once more at Syracuse
Must be for life or death. The faithful hind
Obeyed without a murmur, wondering much
What thing should be, dreading some perilous chance
Waited his lord. And then the senator,
The same voice calling him, " Remember well
Thou diest, or thy friend, at set of sun,"
Entered his well-loved home.

He kissed his wife
And children dear, striving with trivial talk
Of home and homely things to hide his care,
Which pressed him sore ; but she regarding him
With love's keen eyes, and that unwonted weight
Of trouble on his brow, would question him
What things had been, till last she drew from him
The sorrowful tale ; how ere that day was done
He stood condemned to death, and how he came
Only to bid farewell to those his eyes
Should see no more in life. Then she who heard
Broke forth in sobs and wailings, and accused
The tyrant's pitiless spite. But with calm words
And precepts of the Master, he would soothe
The woman's passionate grief, until she lay
Silent upon his breast, and round them stood
Their children, hardly knowing what had been
Or what should come to be.

But as they spoke
With heightened tones, the listening slave without
Caught his dear master's words, and hearing, knew
The instant peril. Quick he stole to where
The tired steed, resting from his journey, stood
Asleep, and then taking a high resolve,
Knowing his master's steadfast mind, and fain
To save him from himself, and caring naught
For aught beside, with one sure stroke he stabbed
The poor beast to the heart, and then he fled
His master's anger.

With declining day,
After long hours of pain, from his sad home
Came Pythias forth, watching the westering sun
With heavy heart, for still that warning voice,
"Remember, ere the sunset," called to him,
And from his weeping wife and children dear
Tore himself free, and, parting with a groan,



Flung forth on his return, prepared to die,
Since Fate had willed it thus, and sought long time
His slave Lucullus. But in vain he called,
For nowhere was he found ; then desperate,
Marking the flight of time, he sought and found
His horse where he had left it, but the beast,
Stabbed to the heart, lay dead.

Then in despair

He fled his home and rushed with frenzied haste
Along the road he came, hastening long miles
On foot to Syracuse, until his limbs
Failed him, his heart throbbed high, his breath came short,
And, stumbling as he went, he fell, and lay
A long while senseless. When his life returned
The old voice filled his ears. The sinking sun
Cast lengthening shadows. To his feet once more
Struggling, and doubting much if time remained
To save his friend, a little space again


He tottered in despair. And then, behold,
Just when his stiffening limbs refused to move
Another foot-pace, tethered to a tree,
The stout steed of some passing wayfarer
Caparisoned ! Then to the saddle quick
Mounting, and giving rein, he breathed again,
If he might save his friend's life by his own.

Mile after mile the headlong chase swept on
By the dark, purple sea. The ghostly peaks
Of Ætna flushed, lit by the dying sun ;
The white sails reddened ; the long rays, oblique,
Lower and lower sank, dazzling his sight
With shafts of ruddy gold. No sound arose
On the hushed evening but the hurried beat
Of ringing hoofs, and the quick-coming throb
Of laboured breath, as the tired charger reeled
Upon his way. Lower, and lower still,

The sinking sunbeams shot athwart the fields,
And his heart sunk in turn. Then once again
The echoing streets, thick with applauding crowds,
As on they flashed ; the palace marbles, pink
With sunset ; till at last the waiting throng,
The tyrant and his guard, the headman's axe,
Lit by the dying rays ; and as the sun
Sank red upon the hill, the breathless horse
Staggered and fell, and Pythias, leaping down,
Fell upon Damon's neck, knowing him saved.

Then at the tyrant's nod, the gaolers struck
The chains from Damon's limbs, and Pythias,
Laying his patient head upon the block,
Prepared to die ; when lo, a voice was heard,
Grown softer than of wont, and merciful :
"Enough ! I have proved them. In this sordid world,
Where he who thinks to mount above the plain

Must wade through blood and mire, breathing foul air
Of perfidy and fraud, to gain his end,
And find it worthless, lying, cozening,
And all for naught,—pure natures still are bound
Indissolubly. More than sovereign power,
And gold and veined marbles, are to him
The crowned philosopher who sits above
The subject crowd, and, having gained the height
Of earthly things, contemns them ; the calm eyes
And aspect of Divine Philosophy
Which conquers self, and from the warring notes
Of individual lives draws subtly forth
Some gracious, unsuspected harmony,
Some mystic chain of numbers, which binds fast
The waste and chaos of discordant aims
In some new cosmic order. I have found—
I, who have striven, and prize more than my crown
And blood-stained triumphs of successful war



The laurel of Olympia—a new height
Of knowledge ; a new virtue unattained,
And yet attainable ; a sacrifice,
A Brotherhood ; a self surrender, winged
To higher Heaven than the sensual Gods'
To whom the ignorant kneel. Go ! ye are free ;
I pardon you. But now I pray ye take
Your ruler to your friendship, teaching me
The secrets of your creed, a proselyte
To serve a common Master. Then he made
As if to embrace them.


But no answering word
The Brethren spake, and slowly turned and went,
Bowing their silent heads. The tyrant stretched
His arms in vain, as honouring their faith,
Fired with some half-false reverence for the truth
His life denied.

But they would none of him.

ARMENIA, A.D. 1894-5 *

DEAD by their ravaged fields
And blackened roof-trees chill,
After long woes at rest,
Our martyred brothers lie.
Through the dark forests, deep,
Naked and famished, creep
The sad survivors of a race oppressed ;
White on the blue autumnal sky,
Ararat's sacred hill
O'er the forlorn and ruined plain
Uncaring seems to smile—
Uncaring for the blood, the wrong, the guile,

* This and the poem "America and Armenia" were written at the request of the Armenian Relief Committee.



The hopeless griefs, the oft-repeated pain,
The innocent lives defiled, the supplications vain.

The spoiler robs and preys,
With rape and torture for his daily work.
Unchecked the wolfish Kurd torments and slays.
The obscene, ineffable Turk,
False heart and glozing tongue,
Fills all the hapless land with lust and blood.
Into the murder-pits are flung
Dying and dead together, old and young,
The sire, the mother with her unborn child,
The virgin lives defiled.
Or if escape there be 'tis through the shame
Of souls too weak to avow the Holy Name,
Or theirs who from the dreadful precipice,
Veiling their desperate eyes,
Plunge with their children through the void to gain,
Dying, release from pain.

What? Has God's thought forgot
His people's woes? Doth His averted ear—
No more their cries of hopeless anguish hear—
The wail for precious lives, which now are not?
Shall not the all-seeing Eye
Look downward from the dumb unheeding sky
And with a glance confound the might of Ill?
Shall the oppressor still
Through endless æons wreak his fiendish will—
Ravish and rob and murder in the name
Of that dark Antichrist whose rule of shame
Blights the dead East; for whom the spear, the sword,
And ruthless horrors of unsparing war
Are weapons fitter far
Than are the futile forgeries of his Word,
Who, knowing not compassion, yet makes sure
With prayer from lips impure
Of Paradise—no place of Innocence,

Or white-winged soaring Hope immense,
But a foul Lazar-house of Lust and Sense ?

And this, our Europe strong,
Which at a common altar boasts to kneel,
Shall no compassionate yearning come to move,
No stirrings of fraternal love,
For these our brothers who have pined so long ?
Shall She no pity feel
For these, the martyrs of our Faith who sigh,
Treading the cold and sunless ways of death
Long ere they gain to die ;
Strong Russia, Champion of the Christian East ;
France, through whose soul, too generous to forget,
The ardour of St. Louis pulses yet ;
Our noble England, with the years increased,
A mightier Venice with " the East in fee,"
And her great eldest daughter, She

Who sits august and free
A crownless Commonwealth from sea to sea.
Shall these, unmoved by the long Past of pain,
Wait till the tide of blood returns again
And watch once more their helpless brethren die,
These who upheld or spared the waning secular lie?
Nay, nay, it is enough! enough! No more
Shall black Oppression rule. Her reign is o'er.
No more, O Earth! no more!

No more! Forbid it, Heaven!
Arise, O puissant Christendom, be strong!
God's voice within you calls—the voice of Fate!
Confound this monstrous tyranny of wrong.
Let Love prevail, not Hate!
With you the Future lies. 'Twere shame indeed
If mutual jealousies, if coward fears,
Adding fresh force to swell the sum of ill,


Prolonged the accursed reign of pain and tears,
And bade again a hapless nation bleed.
Succour the weak ! Drive back their pitiless foes !
Let not despair afflict your brethren still !
Let the new-coming Age, a happier birth,
Bless these waste-places of the suffering Earth !
Let Peace, with Law, the tranquil valleys fill,
And make the desert blossom as the Rose !

August 17, 1895.

SONG.

We are stirred, we are thrilled, we are fired
By impetuous pulses of Song,
Not perceiving the Power that hurried the spirit along,
Nor the Presence that inspired,
Nor what hidden passion swells the throat
With that high-soaring note.

We are laden and sunk and opprest
By a load of despondence and dread,
Not knowing what mystical presence unseen, unconfessed,
Those deep misgivings bred,
Nor why across the mute and tuneless soul
Dumb tides of silence roll.



Ah, whether in silence or song the high music may come,
A dark hand rules the strings ;
Be it Love, be it Hope, be it Faith the high melody
wings,
Or Doubt which strikes it dumb,
A hidden Player sweeps the mystic chords
Too high, too deep for words.


A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

ANOTHER Christmas-tide,
Another solemn mirth,
White robed again and purified,
Once more the wondering Earth
Listens, while on the frosty, star-lit air,
As of old time the glad Angelic throng,
The midnight chimes peal out in bursts of joyous song.

This is the Day which saw His Birth!

Rejoice, be glad, oh Earth !

In old fanes over seas,
In humble homes of prayer,
His people, bending faithful knees,
Welcome Him everywhere ;



O'er earth's unbounded plains, from pole to pole,
Swift speeds the blessed day when first He came
To raise a fallen world from lowest depths of shame.

This is the Day which saw His Birth!

Rejoice, be glad, oh Earth!

Therefore men's souls rejoice,
Though sullen winter's spite
May send to drown their jubilant voice
Wild storms and furious night.
To-day we keep our solemn festival ;
No presage warns of coming tragedy,
Only our newer hope immense begins to be.


This is the Day which saw His Birth!

Rejoice, be glad, oh Earth!

Our hope ! But when, indeed,
Shall Peace on earth prevail ?

When shall the innocent cease to bleed,
The sorrowful to wail?
Murder and war and rapine still
Christian and Heathen vex alike to-day,
Though since on earth He came ages have rolled away.
Yet on this Day which saw His Birth!
Rejoice, be glad, oh Earth !

Despair not, waiting Earth ;
Have faith, and thou shalt see
How from that far-off mystic birth
At last comes Victory.
Meet, brethren, round the sacred hearth of home,
With souls and minds by ancient faith inspired,
With glowing hearts by love and pity pierced and fired.
This is the Day which saw His Birth !
Rejoice, be glad, oh Earth !




Peace and good-will to all,
Be this our Christmas song ;
Raise up the erring feet which fall,
The feeble hands make strong.
Though the slow ages leave His work undone,
Let us, who feel and mourn our brothers' need,
Find in his tender words an all-sufficing creed.
So shall this Day which saw His Birth
Make glad the waiting Earth.

IN BOHEMIA.*

THIS tale I seemed to hear a Gipsy tell,
A dark-browed woman prisoned in a cell
In wild Bohemia :

“ Ay, ’twas in the gloom
Of the dark, twilight pine woods far away
They found me sitting, somewhat dazed, I think,
By what sad things had been, and slow to move
When all was done, self-chained, as I am now
Within this lonely cell, and pondering
All the sad Past. I know not what the Law

* See the correspondence from Vienna (*Daily News*, November 20, 1895).




Can do with me, nor care. But there—just there
Where you stand now—do you see two corpses lie,
One, shot through the brain, who bears a stony calm
Upon his face ; and one with staring eyes
And knitted brows, and clenched jaws, breathing rage
And balked revenge ? Do you see the crimson stain
Steal on—or is it fancy, and there comes
Nothing to break the bare and ghastly white
Of this unlovely cell, and I but dream
That dreadful dream again ?

What ? would you learn
How 'tis that I come here a prisoner bound
By self-forged chains ? Our swift Gitana blood
Breeds savage jealousies and hates and loves—
Not the slow current of your Northern veins,
But a fierce tigerish impulse, half desire,
Half selfish pride. We wanderers keep to-day
The unbridled passion, which the tropic sun

Burned in our blood ; and I am of my race,
As you of yours.

Two there were sought my love.

One a man, strong, with all the vigorous strength
Of manhood, tall of stature, black of beard,
And swarthy cheeked—a strenuous mate to bind
A woman's wandering wings—strong arms and loins ;
A husband more than lover, so that long
I doubted if 'twere well to smile on him,
Half fearful lest his fierce and tyrannous will
Should prove too strong for mine. Therefore it was
I hesitated, drawn now here, now there.
I think I never loved him ; though maybe
His splendid manhood drew me as it draws
Weak women the world over—us who toil
And wander day by day, and lie by night
Tired 'neath the midnight stars, and those who sink,
After soft hours of silken dalliance,




Canopied close, in down and perfumed ease,
Within their gilded palaces. They too
Are women weak as I, and loving well
The strong, supporting arm—ay, though sometimes
'Twere raised in anger—and the resonant tones
And flashing eye, because their strength confirms
Our weakness.

But because our souls are weak,
Not strength alone allures us, but the charm
Of youth, the scarcely shaded lip and cheek,
The dark plume on the brow, the lissom grace
Of budding age; and one there was, a boy
Of fitting years to mine, bold as a god,
And lithe as a young panther, and he cast
Dark passionate eyes on me, as he had cast them
Upon a score before, and at the tones
Of his gay accents, all the woman's love
Of beauty and things fair rose up and strove

For mastery with the woman's shrinking nature
That loved the guiding hand, and overthrew it
While he was near—love of the sight alone,
Not of the heart or mind. And though I knew not
Which love to choose, it was the eyes' desire
Prevailed at last.

And yet I do not think
I loved him ; for when all the gossips came
To tell me he was faithless, now with this one
And now with that, it was not pain I knew,
Only contempt for him and wounded pride,
And (though that argues unrequited love),
A longing for revenge. You cannot know,
You Northerns, through whose veins the tepid blood
Creeps slowly, with what pulses the hot tide
Leaps from our torrid hearts.


Therefore I planned
A subtle scheme. I wrote a loving letter,



Bidding him meet me in the wood when eve
Was falling ; I had much to say to him,
And begged that he would come, for it might prove
The last time we should meet, and we should be
Together and alone. Then, when 'twas sent,
I wrote another to the man I feared,
Not loved, and bade him to the trysting-place
A little later, when the dying sun
Was sinking on the hills, and I would give him
The answer he had asked. When all was done,
And both I knew would come—poor fools allured
By love, where love was not, only revenge
And hatred—I went forth without a word
After my toil was done, and took with me,
Half ignorant of what I did or wherefore,
Concealed upon my bosom, like the asp
Of our Egyptian Queen, with shining tube,
A tiny weapon, for what end I know not

Nor knew ; but with our Gipsy blood 'tis well,
When passions rise to fever-heat, to hold
Some strength reserved, and I had done that day
That which might lead to bloodshed, and 'twere best
The way to escape lay open, if my fate
At last should leave me lonely to despair.

Then when the dying day, declining, cast
Its longer shadows through the darkling wood,
Hastening, within a little glade I found
My youthful lover waiting at the place
Where he should die ere sunset. As I saw him,
It did repent me of my deed. I fain
Had warned him of his doom ; but as we sate
Upon a fallen tree-trunk, side by side,
Some careless boast, some burst of mocking mirth,
Some jibe at woman's love, or covert sneer,
Fanning my jealous fancies into flame,




Filled all my soul with madness. And the sun
Sank on the hills and a cold chill of eve
Breathed like the breath of Fate, as, looking up,
I saw the angry face and lurid eyes
Of the avenger come ; and knew that doom
Was nigh, fierce fight and blood, and pain and death.

Ah, I remember well with what fierce rage,
Poor fools ! they rushed together. I mocked them both,
Dupes of a loveless woman who cared naught
Whatever ill befell them, when they closed
In mortal combat, the strong stalwart man
And the lithe agile youth. Long time the fight
Raged doubtfully, 'twixt those slow moving limbs
And that swift panther tread ; they struck, they strained,
They twined, until at last the younger fell,
O'erborne, upon the earth.

Then with a cry

Of rage he rose, and soon the keen knives flashed
Red in the last rays of the sinking sun ;
The dark eyes, lighted by an inward fire,
Burned with the light of hate. And I sat mute
And motionless, watching as those who sit
Sporting with blood and pain. I had no wish
To stay their hands, nor spoke one soothing word
To avert their doom. The keen eyes, the quick limbs,
The feints, the thrusts, the parries, moved me not,
Who sat with eager eyes, and watched the fight,
Like some tempestuous drama, to the close,
From act to breathless act. There came no sound
But the quick clashing knives, the deep drawn breaths,
The crackle of trampled wood, until at last
One agonizing cry, and my young lover,
With large reproachful eyes, fell at my feet,
Stabbed to the heart.

Then all my former hate



Transformed to love and pity, I rose and fell
Upon his breast, and kissed him ere he died ;
And when I rose I saw the angry eyes
Of the other bent on me, as if he knew
My secret and despised me. Not a word
He spoke, nor I, but instantly the flood
Of passionate love aroused was turned to hate
For him who did despoil me, and contempt
For life and for myself, and a great rage
Against the stronger, rising, blotted out
All my old thoughts. No more I sought to gain
Deliverance dying. As he stood before me
With fierce, victorious eyes, I raised my hand,
Drew forth the little asp from out my breast,
And shot him through the brain.

He fell beside

The other, and I stirred not till 'twas night ;
And when they came, they found me pondering still

SELF-SLAIN.

SOFTLY she closed the midnight door,
The pale stars faded in the sky,
The sinking waters seemed to sigh
Low on the lonely shore.

Then quick, along the ghostly down,
Deep lane, and lonely church she sped,
By the white silent road which led
To the faint twinkling town.

Here her dead mother loved to pray ;
There were the lanes in springtime blue ;
The wolds which every March she knew
Alive with bleatings gay ;

Till through the brief June night the Day
Streamed from the East, with pennons white,
Skyward the blithe lark soared away,
And carolled to the Light.

Her limbs a sudden horror stirred,
Her soul a new-born chill of fear,
As from the half-hid plain she heard
The thunderous din draw near.

With throbbing heart and faltering pace,
Her desperate feet the station gain ;
She hurries in with hidden face ;
Shrill shrieks the parting train,

Which takes another victim fair
To swell the City's sum of ill,
And that dread chorus of Despair,
Which rises from her still.

Though Faith and Love and Honour call,
Though all the sorrowing Angels strive,
They keep not feet fore-doomed to fall,
Nor a dead soul alive.


AMERICA AND ARMENIA.

DECEMBER, 1895.

THE sad East faints with blood and pain ;
Unchecked, the accursed Turk
Completes his fiendish work ;
The avenging nations stand with fettered hands,
Shuddering, with noble aspirations vain,
Alone our England stands.
Still on the ravaged plains the cries
Of death with torture pierce the affrighted skies,
And we whose souls would fain discern,
With eyes and lips that burn,
The Union of our race, the rule of Peace,
Turn to that greater England over-sea,

Waiting the swelling tide of sympathy,
The voice of a great people from afar
Fired to a holy war
For the weak folk they loved but might not save
Driven from their desolate homes ;
Nay, but a silence reigns as of the grave,
No voice of answer comes !


No answer? Nay, an answer comes indeed,
Not that of eloquent lips and kindling eyes
Where Christian thousands meet, but accents cold
The soulless utterance of the selfish State,
Rude menace, arrogant word,
Breathing not love, but hate,
And that fell arbitration of the sword
Now at this fateful crisis when
The hopes of crushed, despairing men
Turn to our lonely England for redress.
Ah ! it is worse than wrong ; 'tis darkest wickedness !



And men can dare compute the loss and gain
Of fratricide ! There, towns made desolate
By the avenging storm of shot and shell,
All those fair coasts and seas a gate of hell ;
Here, white-winged commerce wrecked, a sister State
Invaded, dreams of close-knit brotherhood
Drowned in a sea of blood ;
The blessed thought of Universal Peace
For centuries banished far ;
All soaring aspirations doomed to cease,
Blighted by ruthless war.
Now, at this moment when our England's arm
Should save the innocent from deadly harm,
To cripple her, for some mean sordid aim,
Some lust for Gold or Place,—
Sure 'twere the very irony of shame,
The depth of deep disgrace,
That the great home of Freedom in the West

By all our Race confest
The cherished hope of free laborious men,
Should strike with impotence our England's might,
Stay her strong arm uplifted for the Right,
And crown, through Freedom's power ignobly strong,
The Victory of Wrong.

Forbid it, Heaven ! 'Tis crime, and worse than crime,
To dream this villainy. The despot's cloak
Of base intrigue hides not thy limbs sublime,
August Republic. Thou in flawless mail
Stridest from sea to sea, and dost prevail,
By bonds of Law and Righteousness made free.
Keep thou the thought thy first forefathers spoke ;
Freedom and Peace be thine, not impious war ;
Take thou thy fitting place, and let thy word
For Justice, not for Empery, be heard,
And thou a radiant, solitary star !



TO MAY.

How shall I pen a roundelay,
What shall my halting accents say,
To one whose childhood fleets away
On this her seventeenth natal day?
No solemn note, but light and gay
Befits the month, the name of May.

Girl, till thy far autumnal day,
When eyes are dim and hair is grey,
Keep thou the truth these lines convey :
Enjoy thy youth, be glad to-day,
Yet never let thy footsteps stray
From the unswerving perfect way ;
The voice within thy soul obey,
And thy November shall be May !

LLYN OWAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE VALE OF TOWY.

AMID the folded hills
The lake lies darkly clear;
A death-like calmness stills
The deep-set mere.

And on its tranquil face,
Like stars upon the night,
Asleep in nymphlike grace,
Float lilies white.

Once, where the lake is now—
Thus old-time legends tell—
Lay, fathom-deep below,
A magic well,

A bubbling fountain deep
Of fairy hands the boon
Where shepherds drove their sheep,
Parching with noon.

Free gift of elfin grace
For all, whose need being done,
Should on the spring replace
The covering stone.

There on his dusty way,
Athirst and weary, came
One whom the blaze of day
Burned like a flame.


Sir Owain, a brave knight
Of Arthur's court, had come
Victor in many a fight,
To his old home.

Weary and spent was he,
Weary his faithful steed ;
They stumble helplessly
In mortal need.

When on the sweet old spring
Belovéd by the boy,
The man's eyes, wandering,
Lighted with joy.

Straight from the bubbling source
They drank long draughts and deep ;
Then, with recruited force,
Sank long in sleep.

But the knight, wholly spent,
Nor aught remembering,
Sealed not before he went
That gracious spring.



Then through a waking dream
He seemed to hear the sound,
Of a loud, threatening stream,
Which hemmed him round.

And seeking in surprise
Those vanished pastures green,
Straightway his sorrowing eyes
Knew what had been.

For where the emerald mead
Smiled, white with flocks, before,
Dark waters rolled instead
From shore to shore.

Then the stout knight, dismayed
By what his hand had done ;
In some blind cave, afraid,
Hid from the sun.

And there in slumbers deep
He waits his fated hour,
To rise from secular sleep
By Arthur's power.

For he shall wake again
When Arthur's voice doth call ;
And from that long-drowned plain
The flood shall fall.

* * * *

Fair legend which can bring
A god-like voice and arm,
To curb the unfettered spring
Of age-long harm.

Come soon, blest Presence strong ;
Bring wisdom in thy train ;
The earth lies sunk in Wrong--
Come thou again !

LLYWELYN AP GRUFFYDD.


AN ODE.

AFTER dead centuries,
Neglect, derision, scorn,
And secular miseries,
At last our Cymric race again is born,
Opens again its heavy sleep-worn eyes,
And fronts a brighter Morn.

Shall then our souls forget,
Dazzled by visions of our Wales to Be,
The Wales that Was, the Wales undying yet,
The old heroic Cymric chivalry ?
Nay ! one we are indeed,

With that dim Britain of our distant sires
Still the same love the patriot's bosom fires,
With the same wounds our loyal spirits bleed,
The heroes of the Past, are living still
By each sequestered vale, and cloud-compelling
hill.

Dear heart that wast so strong
To guide the storm of battle year by year,
Last of our Cymric Princes ! dauntless King !
Whose brave soul knew not fear !
Thou from Eryri's summits, swooping down
Like some swift eagle, o'er the affrighted town
And frowning Norman castles hovering,
Onward didst bear the flag of Victory ;
And oft the proud invader dravest back
In ruin from thy country's bounds, and far
Didst roll from her the reflux wave of war,




Till 'neath the swelling flood
The low fat Lloegrian plains were sunk in blood.

Long through rude years of Force and trampled Laws,
Thy strenuous arm sustained thy country's cause,
Champion of Wales ; thou through the storm of
fight

The ruddy Dragon barest flaming bright ;
Defeat or Victory,
Alike were naught to thee,
Undaunted warrior for thy country's weal,
Scorning the hurtling shaft, the piercing steel ;
With thy raw levies fronting without fear
The Marchers' serried ranks, the Norman's spear,
Comrade of that strong Earl whose prescient mind
The coming tyrants' power could bind,
And by free air of high debate,
Healing the ills of State,

Laid firm for centuries to be
The fair broad stone of Britain's liberty.

I see thy love-tale blossom like a rose,
Amid the desert of thy troublous life,
Girt round by watchful foes,
And arid wastes of endless pain and strife ;
The fair maid, sweet and mild,
The great Earl's best-loved child,
Whom crossing the tempestuous sea,
Rude pirate hands long rapt from thee,
At last in some brief truce from war's alarms
Given to thy faithful arms ;
I see thy nuptial pomps by Worcester's reverend shrine,
With England's and with Scotland's King
And close thronged nobles witnessing ;
And then two little years of wedded peace
Thy struggles' brief surcease,
Till thy loved Queen, rapt from the cheerful day,



Traversed too soon the unattended way,
Leaving her child and thee, and to thy loveless home
No voice of comfort more, nor peace again might come.
I see thee when thy lonely widowed heart
Grew weary of its pain,
In one last desperate onset vain,
Hurl thyself on thy country's deadly foes ;
From North to South the swift rebellion sped,
The Castles fell, the land arose ;
Wales reared once more her weary war-worn head
Through triumph and defeat, a chequered sum,
Till the sure end should come,
The traitorous ambush, and the murderous spear ;
Still 'mid the cloistered glories of Cwmhir,
I hear the chants sung for the Kingly dead,
While Cambria mourned thy dear dishonoured head.

Strong son of Wales ! thy fate
Not without tears, our Cymric memories keep ;

Our faithful, unforgetting natures weep
The ancestral fallen Great.
Not with the stalwart arm,
After her age-long peace,
We serve her now, nor keen uplifted sword,
But with the written or the spoken Word
Would fain her power increase ;
The Light we strive to spread
Is Knowledge, and its power
Comes not from captured town or leaguered tow
A closer brotherhood
Unites the Cymric and the Anglian blood,
Yet separate, side by side they dwell, not one,
Distinct till Time be done.

But we who in that peaceful victory
Our faith, our hope repose,
With grateful hearts, Llywelyn, think of thee

Who fought'st our country's foes.
Whose generous hand was open to reward
The dauntless patriot Bard,
Who loved'st the arts of Peace, yet knewest through life
Only incessant strife.
Who ne'er, like old Iorwerth's happier son,
Didst rest from battles won,
But strovest for us still, and not in vain ;
Since from that ancient pain,
After long ages, Cambria of thy love
Feels through her veins new patriot currents move,
And from thy ashes, like the Phoenix, springs
Skyward on soaring wings,
And fronts, grown stronger for the Days that Were,
Whatever Fortune, 'neath God's infinite air,
Fate and the Years prepare !

AN ELEGY, JANUARY 3, 1895.*

DEAD at the crest, the crown

And blossom of his fortunes, this strong son
Of our great Realm sank down
Beneath the load of Honours scarcely won.


Windsor's Imperial Towers

Kept watch and ward above him as he lay ;
His Sovereign lavished flowers
In gratitude upon his honoured clay.

Through stress and storm afar

He crossed once more the troubled wintry wave
In that stout ship of War,
By the old flag enshrouded for his grave.

* On the death at Windsor of Sir John Thompson, the Canadian Premier.



Great Empire, heart and mind

Closer let Britain's sons together draw !

Such lives, such deaths, can bind

A firmer Union than the bond of Law.

May this career sublime,

This honoured ending of an honoured life,

Bear fruit through secular Time

In hearts drawn near, deep peace, averted Strife !

IN MEMORIAM : H. D. H.*

OBITT, JANUARY 8, 1895.

COLD is the hand to-day,

The manly voice is still

Which in years dim and grey,

Our hearts could thrill.

Low lies the lofty head,

Hushed the strong life's loud stress,

We go in heaviness,

The Master's dead !

Still world-dimmed eyes recall

The vanished boyish years ;

The stalwart figure tall,

The voice that cheers,

* Hugo D. Harper, many years Headmaster of Sherborne School

The keen discerning eye,
The passionate hate of ill,
The generous sympathy,
Live with us still.

The genial laugh awakes
The courts with early morn,
The deep voice thrills and breaks
In pity or scorn.

Sleep sound, strong soul, sleep well !
To many an English home,
The echo of thy knell
Shall sadly come.

Or where 'mid forests still,
Or the far Austral plain,
Thy grey-beard scholars thrill
With sudden pain ;

Recalling the old School,
The unforgotten years,
The dead man's kindly rule
With grateful tears.

ABERYSTWYTH, MARCH 1, 1895.*

TO-DAY we come to sow

(Rejoice, 'tis Spring, 'tis Spring !)

The seed which soon shall grow,

To a diviner thing.

The stone which here we lay

To stately heights shall rise,

Through happy years to be

Fronting the approving skies.

Give praise, be glad ; 'tis Spring to-day, 'tis Spring !

Once the fond woman's heart

Dwarfed the swift woman's mind :

Divorced, they pined apart.

Now, heart and brain combined,

* On laying the foundation stone of the Hall of Residence for Women.

A loftier height shall reach.

Each soul that blossoms here,

Still through a widening sphere,

All it has learnt shall teach.

Be glad, rejoice ; 'tis Spring to-day, 'tis Spring !

Bright day expected long !

Forget we not to praise

Her whose clear artless song

Her sisters' lot would raise,

Whose full and generous hand

Aided, nor here alone ;


Nor those who come a kindred band

To lay this fateful stone.

Build quick, build strong, their women's voices sing !

Not less we rear a shrine

Who build to-day, than they




Who, in dim ages grey,
Reared minster-towers divine.
Knowledge is God-like—not to know
The Eternal Law is Wrong.
Let woman's nature grow
To high fulfilment strong.
Advance! Aspire! Achieve! Be this our song!

ST. PAUL'S, FEBRUARY 3, 1896.

FROM Art's new-widowed Halls,
 Slow through the shrouded street
The dark procession crawls
 With ordered feet.

Through the wide Western door,
 As 'twere a crownèd head,
Comes, to return no more,
 The Honoured Dead.

The wailing voices sigh,
 The solemn trumpets blare,
While thick mists hide the sky
 And choke the air.



Scarce can Man's feeble light
 Dispel the gathered gloom,
Which like a drear half-night
 Broods round the tomb.

Scarce by sweet soaring song
 And Paul's triumphant word,
Through the sad ritual long,
 Our souls are stirred.

When, lo ! one golden ray,
 Waking the Dome above,
Floats on its glowing way,
 Winged like a dove ;

Sets first a golden crown
 On each angelic head,
Then slowly trembles down
 Where lies the dead,

And on the fading white
Of lilies seems to burn,
That in the kindly light
To Amaranths turn,

Bringing a prayer, a breath
Of hope ere all is done :
“ Night cannot quench, nor Death
Life’s mystic Sun.”

LINES ON THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE
OF THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BRIGHT,
FEBRUARY 11, 1896.

SEVEN years have fled since on thy honoured clay
I laid a fading wreath of grateful verse ;
Willing, once more I come again to-day
Thy unforgotten virtues to rehearse ;
Friend of the friendless else, thou art not dead
Whilst still one voice laments thy honoured head !

Nay, nay, rejoice ! the time is past for tears.


Now when our long-lost leader comes to stand
Pleading once more for England 'midst his peers,
Pure as the marble from the sculptor's hand,—

Not grief be ours, but joy that he has come,
Who being dead yet speaketh, to his home.

Here 'mid the lengthening pageant of the Great
Still let him stand, speechless yet eloquent,
Taking the eager air of high debate,
And echoes of our freeman's Parliament ;
Here let him plead as erst impassioned, strong
In love of Right, and scorn and hate of Wrong.

Ah ! well that he is come ! the peoples groan ;
Torture and murder vex them day by day.
Would he were living still to hear their moan
And fright the accursed spoiler from his prey
Yet though his voice warlike for peace is gone
Pray Heaven its accents still go widening on !

Here from his silent lips be wafted far
A gracious message over land and sea,



Deep horror of the fratricide of war,
 High aspirations for the Peace to be,
As when long years ago his eloquent word,
Spent though in vain, the listening Senate stirred.

Here let him plead again the toiler's cause,
 The burden of the oppressed, the weak, the slave,
Crushed to the earth by old abusive laws,
 The voice of freedom dies not with the grave ;
Mute though they seem, those lips so cold and white
Shall glow with burning utterance for the right.

Stand here, great Englishman ! Earth knows to-day
 No prouder title than that world-wide name ;
Though thrones and rank and honours pass away,
 There comes no cloud that shall obscure thy fame.
Here in the precincts where thy years were spent
Inspire, sustain thy well-loved Parliament !

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"Worthy to rank with the 'Ode of Life' in power, sweetness, and melody, and, like the 'Epic of Hades,' full of lines of exquisite beauty and far-reaching moral suggestiveness."—*Leeds Mercury*, 1891.

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"His voice is not the voice of science rebuking science, nor always of higher knowledge silencing lower, nor can he always give us a sound reason for the faith that is in him. But as the poet of the religion of our fathers, he has spoken not in vain. For above all, he is full of that sincerity which Carlyle considered indispensable to true greatness. . . . Many that read him will feel a fresh comfort and consolation which they will not scorn to acknowledge."—*Murray's Magazine*, January, 1891.

"It is written in singularly clear and graceful blank verse. Throughout this long poem his verse is never trivial; passages

of dignified narrative, of graceful description, of eloquent pathos, succeed each other in pleasant alternation without any failure of ear or relaxation of artistic effort on the part of the poet. As mere stories, most of these sketches could not easily be surpassed, and their graceful music is sure to be widely popular."—*Academy*, February 28th, 1891.

"‘A Vision of Saints’ has a commanding force of influence upon the sympathies of all who are moved to reverential admiration of deeds of self-sacrifice in the great cause of the Faith. The success which he has achieved is marked."—*Liverpool Mercury*, January, 1891.

"The story of S. Roch is not so clearly told as is usual with Mr. Morris, but that of S. Francis of Assisi is put with a clearness and an accompanying pleasantness of description which call for praise."—*Athenæum*, March 14th, 1891.

"We are much mistaken if the ‘Vision of Saints’ will not prove to be the most widely popular of all the efforts of his muse."—*Sheffield Independent*, March 26th, 1891.

"Fluency and suavity, the chief characteristics of Mr. Morris's blank verse, are admirably suited to adorn the gentle earnestness which marks his thought to enshrine the calm long-suffering heroism of his saints. Of the ‘Vision of Saints’ we can say heartily, in Mr. Morris's own words, what we believe will be the verdict of every open-minded reader—

‘These high processions lingering with me seemed
To purify my soul.’"

—*Speaker*, March 28th, 1891.

SONGS WITHOUT NOTES.

"These songs exemplify anew Mr. Morris's faculty for giving graceful, melodious, and distinguished expression to thoughts that are somewhat lacking in distinction. 'The Voice of Spring' displays his muse at its best. We cannot refuse to admire his healthy optimism, his glowing faith, and his attempts to idealize and draw a lesson from the more sordid aspects of modern life."—*The Times*, April 12th, 1894.

"The poems, chiefly lyrical, of Mr. Lewis Morris's new volume will please a great number of persons, since the qualities of 'Songs without Notes' are precisely those that have gained for previous volumes of this poet a considerable and partially intelligible popularity. A reposeful and sober style, a subdued pathos, a poetic manner mellifluously bland, appeal to most readers. 'At a Country Wedding' is an agreeable example of the chastened expression and placid flow of his lyric verse. It is a pretty epithalamium, and decidedly unconventional. Charming also is the 'Voice of Spring,' with its refrain-like close. We turn with pleasure to the stanzas entitled 'Marathon,' in which his qualities are happily blended."—*Saturday Review*, April 21st, 1894.

"The new book contains much good and graceful poetry. But it is provokingly unequal. He is not to be judged by the poetaster's standard, and things which from the pen of a lesser man might pass as merits, in him must be imputed as faults. But it is pleasant to acknowledge that in this book Mr. Morris is often at his best, and than his best no English singer, save perhaps one, can do better."—*Liverpool Daily Post*, March 21st, 1894.

"The longest poems are 'A Last Will,' 'At the Gate,' and 'The Voice of Spring,' and they are far and away the most important and the best. They reflect a good deal of the thought and manner of Tennyson, and are marked by much of the same

perfection of style and graceful expression."—*Aberdeen Daily Free Press*, April 30th, 1894.

"Readers of the most varied tastes will each find in it a pleasure of his own. If it does not increase his reputation, it will confirm and extend it, and will be welcome to lovers of poetry wherever English poetry is read."—*Scotsman*, April 16th, 1894.

"In these pages Mr. Morris shows once more a manly and reverent tenderness in presence of the waifs and strays of humanity, nor has he lost the power to interpret the unsuspected nobleness of lives which seem to careless eyes prosaic and uninviting."—*Leeds Mercury*, April 14th, 1894.

"Why 'Songs without Notes' is a mystery, for on the whole melodious music is the principal merit of the work. Now the verse glides gently and sweetly along, now it rushes in full flood. In the 'Last Will' the poet's art triumphs in spite of its subject. In spite of poetical translations of sermons, and efforts at sacred lyrics, and semi-scientific essays in verse, Mr. Morris bursts out occasionally into real song. Here, for example, is a beautiful piece of description from the 'Voice of Spring'—

'When the white pear bloom lights the wall,
And gilly-flowers embalm the air;
When shining chestnut cases fall,
And lilacs cluster fair;
When 'mid the bursting coverts show
The blue-eyed violets and the windflowers' snow . . .'

—*National Observer*, June 2nd, 1894.

"The author's laurels have been generally won in narrative poetry and in blank verse. There is much in his Songs to widen the sympathy and elevate the feeling."—*Spectator*, July 28th, 1894.

"Will certainly not diminish, and may even enhance, his reputation. We can recollect no previous poem of his more charming than 'The Voice of Spring.' 'From an American Sermon,' again, shows the poet at his best, and the three semi-official odes are all happily turned. We sincerely congratulate him on his new volume."—*Guardian*, August 15th, 1894.



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